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Moffatt and Mihills.

By W. E. Mihills

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It is generally somewhat interesting to people, otherwise well informed, to know something of their origin, or ancestry, and this must be my excuse for writing up for preservation to future generations the little that I have been able to rescue from obscurity, in relation to mine, from the first settlements of this country up to the present time.

U. D. MILLS.

Fond du Lac, May 7th, 1893.

Having a little leisure time in my old age and considerable curiosity to correctly ascertain my origin, I commenced to trace my ancestors back as far as I could, commencing with my maternal ancestry. "My mother's name was Francis or Fanny Moffatt."

When I commenced this research I had no knowledge of the Moffatt family further back than my grandfather and I did not know when or where he was born, or who his father was, or where he came from. I had always supposed that he was of Irish descent; from the fact that all the Moffatt families that I could find in America, claimed that their ancestors came from Ireland, and I did not change my mind until I had traced two or three families back through Ireland into Scotland, there I found what I concluded was the original stock, and in this I was correct. In this tracing I had valuable help from my friend William Z. Moffatt, of Minneapolis, Minn., and we worked together until I came to the conclusion that my ancestors did not come from Ireland. I was writing to every Moffatt I could hear of in order to get a starting point. I wrote making inquries to Silas C. Moffatt, of Minneapolis Minn., and in return got the following from William Z. Moffatt.

U. D. Mihills. Fond du Lac, Wis.

Dear Sir: Having seen and read your letter of recent date to Silas C. Moffatt, of this city, I take the liberty to inform you that I am engaged in getting up the family history of the Moffatt's, by request of many relatives, and I have in my possession several old letters written from Tegagowan Co., North Ireland, between one and two hundred years ago, giving considerable light on the Moffatt families of Ireland

Virginia and Kentucky. I would like to know from what place did your family come; where did they settle and how did they spell Moffatt?

My grandfather was the son of William Moffatt, born in Kentucky; William was born in Ireland and emigrated with his brothers Thomas and David in 1784, landing in Philadelphia, David going into Virginia, and Thomas and William to Kentucky. My father came to Wisconsin and settled at Mineral Point in 1846 and moved to this city in 1880.

Hoping you will reply soon believe me to be yours truly

WILLIAM Z. MOFFATT.

I could not at that time answer but one of his questions, (how we spelt Moffatt) the others related to the subject which I was trying to unravel and which I afterwards did.

I concluded from the significance of the names running through all the different families being the same that they had originally sprung from the same stock. Mr. Andrew Moffatt, of this city, came from Ireland direct to this place some twenty-five years ago and on questioning him he said his father's name was William and his grandfather's name was William and said he had a cousin by the name of Thomas Hart, an educated man living in Dublin; and gave me his address and also that of other influential men in Ireland who I could correspond with; this made it much easier when we had a foothold or standing point in Ireland to follow the lineage back a couple of hundred years more by written evidence and tradition when all traces would bring up in Scotland. I sent the address to Mr. Moffatt, of Minneapolis; he is a printer of the firm of Moffatt & Thurston, and received the following letter.

U. D. MIHILLS, Fond du Lac, Wis.

MY DEAR SIR: Your esteemed favor is at hand, enclosing address of Thomas Hart, of Dublin, cousin of Andrew Moffatt and others. I shall take pleasure in writing him soon. I find it quite easy to trace the Co. Down branch of the Moffatt fam-

ily. Doubtless he may be able to unearth the information hinging the different branches of those who immigrated to Ireland in an early day.

The information you send relating to the ancestors of David confirms clearly my belief of their family being from the original Scotch tribe, who as tradition has it settled in the valley of the Annan where now is located the picturesque Town of Moffatt, settled about the year 1300.

Of the various branches, I think as you do that the branch from which you came might have emigrated direct from Scotland, from the way they spell the name Moffatt, which seems to be the original way of spelling, and I think is correct. In olden times the name was spelled Moffatt, mainly, sometimes Moffat. The families that have immigrated to Ireland have in time changed the spelling in different ways, some spell it Moffit, some Moffet, some Mofit etc., and different members of the same family often spell it differently. Thanking you for your kindness and with hopes for your final success, I remain yours very sincerely,

WM. Z. MOFFATT.

There is a tradition very generally accepted as true and partially verified by history that at some ancient time about the year nine or ten hundred there lived in the Highlands of Scotland a clan of McMoffats, who were a very hardy, daring people, desperate and rough as any of their neighbors, whose occupation consisted chiefly in feudes and in herding their flocks. About the year twelve or thirteen hundred a desperate turmoil took place in which the McMoffatt's were vanquished, a fragment escaping having been driven from their homes towards the southwestern parts of Scotland. There the family settled, but during the next century the name became simply Moffatt, and many of their clanish ways having undergone a change in their mode of life and occupation. During the fourteenth century we find in Chambers history that the Highland army who were then at war with the English stopped at Moffatt, a town located in the lowlands, evidently established

by the fragment of the aforesaid clan. It is now a flourishing city and every branch of the Moffatt family, both in Ireland and America can be traced back to it, within the last two-hundred and fifty years. The main bulk of the immigration from Scotland to Ireland took place towards the last part of the sixteenth century as soldiers under the Prince of Orange, and when they were no longer needed as soldiers, several of the northern counties of Ireland were given up to them, and from them came the hardy and vigorous race of Scotch Irish that are scattered over Ireland and America; and from them came the Orangemen who have always been enemies to the Catholics. Of all the different families of Moffatt's that I have communicated with I have not come across a Catholic, if they belong to any church they are mostly Presbyterians. I found one Moffatt in our congress and I wrote to him and received the following.

U. D. Mihills, Esq.

My Dear Sir: I have your valued favor of the twenty-eight ultima relating to the ancestry of the Moffatt family and note contents. My father was born in the town of Dunn Cadam county, of Lutrim, Ireland, in the year 1809, he came to this country in 1830 and settled in Clinton county, New York. Father's name was Stephen Moffatt. The Moffatt families as you say can all be traced back to Scotch ancestry. My father now resides at Plattsburgh, New York. I have a brother Gen. Stephen Moffatt, who resides there also If I should get any information later that I think would interest you I will communicate the same to you.

Yours respectfully, J. H. Moffitt.

M. C. 21st., District, N. Y.

I finally became satisfied that my ancestors did not come from Ireland and I transferred my field of labor to the New England states to find some relative who could tell where my grandfather was born, in this I had very efficient help from my nephew, Corwin M. Thayer, of the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. I remembered that when I was a little boy and living in Canada that an uncle of my mother's came

there to visit us. Mother called him uncle Jim. He was my grandfather's youngest brother and I understood he came from Massachusetts. I concluded that their must be some of his descendants living and if I could find them they could tell me where my grandfather was born, so we searched the different towns but in vain for a long time. We found several Moffatt's but evidently not of our family. I received the following letter from one.

U. D. Mihills. Marlboro, March 20, 1890.

Dear Sir: Will write you particulars of the questions you ask as soon as I can find out. Alexander C. Moffatt.

P. S. My father's name was Otis and my grandfather's name was Lemuel I think but am not certain. A. C. M.

I never heard any thing more from him. In the mean time I wrote to a cousin in Canada who I knew had resided several years in Massachusetts. She said she had heard some of her friends speak of Luninburg, Mass., and she thought I could find some of the Moffatt's in Littleton, N. H., so I wrote to Mr. Thayer asking him to drop a line to the Postmaster of each town, in a short time I received the following letter.

Worcester, Mass., April 8th 1890. I wrote to the town clerk of Marlborough and received no answer. You seem to have had better luck and found Alexander C Moffatt there. Their is a town by the name of Milbury, six miles south of this city. I did not know but that was the town you wanted to find, but on investigation learn that it was formed from a part of the town of Sutton in 1813 and you make no mention of hearing your ancestors speak of Sulton.

Mother handed me your letter of April 2nd. Yes, Luninburg is in the county of Worcester about twenty-five miles from this city. I have sent a letter of inquiry there, also one to Littleton N. H., and will let you know if I get any information. Respectfully yours,

Carwin M. Thayer.

In a short time I received the following card.

WORCESTER, April 15th, 1890.

DEAR UNCLE: We have struck the right trail at Littleton, will probably be able to send you the desired information in a few days. C. M. THAYER.

In a few days I received the following from Mr. Thayer.

DEAR UNCLE: I sent a note to the postmaster at Littleton, N. H., and in due time received the enclosed letter.

LITTLETON, N. H., April 14, 1890.

C. M. THAYER.

Yours of the eighth was put in our postoffice box, so I take the liberty to answer. Yes, their are lots of Moffatt's about here. My father's name is David Moffatt, and it was his father who settled in Littleton.

Grandfather Moffatt was born in Winchendon, Mass., he went from their to Langdon, N. H., then he came to Littleton and settled in the year 1815, he had a large family, seven sons and three daughters, nine of whom lived to grow up; most of them are dead now, except Uncle William living in Waterford, Vermont, Uncle John in Brough, Iowa, and Aunt Betsy in Lancaster, N. H., and David of Littleton. They were all married but James.

Uncle William never had any children but all the rest did, there are twenty-three of their children living. Great grandfather Moffatt came from Scotland and was killed in the revolutionary war. He had four sons, William, Richard, David and James. James was my grandfather. Now father would like to know which of the other three was your great-grand father. Respectfully yours, SUE M. BROWNSON,

Lock box 51, Littleton, N. H.

The above letter from Littleton gave us the first glimpse of light on the subject at which we had been working so long.

U. D. M.

In a few days I received the following from Mr. Thayer.

DEAR UNCLE: I send you the answer received from Mrs.

Brownson which explains itself. We are learning a little all the time, so we will not get discouraged. C. M. THAYER.

LITTLETON, May 1st, 1890.

C. M THAYER.

DEAR SIR: I received your prompt answer to my letter. Please pardon me for waiting so long before replying to your questions. We have been moving and have been very busy indeed, I am extremely sorry on your account as well as our own, that we do not know what great grandfather Moffatt's full name was, neither do we know in what year he came from Scotland to this country, all we know is simply this: there were three or four brothers that came from the town of Moffatt, in Scotland, we do not know what become of the others, but great grandfather settled in the town of Winchendon, Mass., from which town he enlisted and was at the battle of Bunker Hill and was afterwards killed at one of the battles fought in New York in 1779. Father says perhaps their was a record kept of the enlistment in the state, and if there was, perhaps you can find out his name by writing to the Secretary of State, or the Adjutant General. We have talked of doing so ourselves but have kept putting it off. We know simply nothing of the Moffatt's outside of our family. Grandfather Moffatt was only four years old when his father was killed, so of course he did not remember much about him. I think his mother gave him away, at least he went somewhere else to live, and staid until he was a man.

Very Respectfully Yours, MRS. S. M. BROWNSON,
Lock box 51, Littleton, N. H.

Some time in July I received the following letter from Mr. Thayer. WORCESTER, July 14, 1890.

DEAR UNCLE: I received your letter of June 11th, which I have neglected to answer until now. You ask where Winchendon is; it is in the county of Worcester, about 37 miles north of this city. I enclose you a note from the postmaster of that town If I can assist you at any time in

your researches I will be pleased to do so.

Respectfully Yours, C. M. Thayer.

Following is the note mentioned.

Winchendon, May 14, 1890.

C. M. Thayer,

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 5th instant is received, I can find no descendant here now of the Moffatt family, but referring to the history of Winchendon I find that there was a William and John Moffatt here in the early settlement of the town; and that William married in 1766 and had four sons, viz, William, Richard, David and James. Richard was drowned in the river below Watervill, when about eighteen years old, and this is about all I can find of what you ask.

Whether either William or John first spoken of, is your great-grandfather you may be able to judge, but if the second named William is your great-grandfather then the first William is your great great-grandfather.

E. S. Merrill, P. M.

This was very gratifying, it gave us information that we had long searched for, "the full name of my great-grandfather." But wishing to know more of the old history or records of the town of Winchendon, I wrote to the postmaster asking him if he could give me from that history the date of his settlement in that town or any particulars that would be interesting, and I received the following letter.

U. D. Mihills,

Dear Sir:

Your letter of July 28th is received and in answer to your enquiries further, I find that William Moffatt came to Winchendon and settled in the west part of the town in the year 1753, his name and his brother John Moffatt are signed to a petition to the governor-in-chief of his majesties Provinces etc., dated June 7th 1755, for protection from the indians. The next account of him is a road that was laid out by the

town from Wm. Moffatt's to John Darling's. The next is the marriage of Wm. Moffatt to Mary Priest, June 6th, 1766. December 1779 there is a record of the town for hauling and chopping wood for Wm. Moffatt's wife, and later for things delivered to Mrs. Moffatt, and from this we infer that she was then a widow, for we have no further account of Wm. Moffatt. Nor do we learn from the history what became of the widow or of the children except the one drowned, but the date of settlement and of his marriage and his wife's maiden name I find as given above. Respectfully Yours

E. S. Merrill, P. M.

On application to the Adjutant General of the State of Mas-achusetts, for the military record of Wm. Moffatt, of Winchendon, Worcestor county, Mass, during the Revolutionary war I received the following.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Boston, March 13, 1893,
Revolutionary service of
William Moffatt, Vol. 12 P 119
Lexington alarm April 19, 1775

Marched from Winchendon Worcester county, under the command of Captain Moses Hall, in Col. Nathan Sparkhawks Regt. Served six days.

Vol. 56 P 158.

William Moffatt, private of Winchendon, enlisted the last of April 1775, in Capt. Johnathan Holman's company, in Col. Ephraim Dolittle, Regt. Served eight months. "In the time of this service the battle of Bunker Hill was fought."

William Moffatt, private from Winchendon, enlisted in Captain Benjamin Edgells company in Col John Jacobs Regt., from the Massachusetts state, now in the service of the United States, engaged for the term of one year from the first of January 1777, for the wages granted by the general court of said state and one day wages for every twenty miles travel returning home.

Vol. 19 P. 13.

"In the above term of service the battles were fought near Saratoga at the capture of Burgoyne's army."

William Moffatt, of Winchendon, Worcester county.
enlisted in Capt. John Whites company
in Col. Abyah Stevens Regiment of militia
in the state of Massachusetts Bay, doing duty
at and near Boston, from the first day
of April until the second day of July 1778

Vol. 24, P 49.

Wm. Moffatt, of Winchendon, enlisted in Captain Thomas Cowdin's company in Col. Samuel Dunny's Regiment of militia from Massachusetts State raised by an order of the General Court in October 1779 to reinforce the Continental army for three months in the state of New York. Enlisted October 26, discharged November 23. Distance from home 188 miles.

Vol. 18 P 111.

This is the last record we have of Wm. Moffatt. He never got home at least I think not, for shortly, we find in the records of the town it speaks of his wife as a widow. Another thing the military records say he enlisted for three months, and was discharged in less than one month 188 miles from home, he was either wounded in battle or was taken sick and left the army and died before he reached home. No further records of him anywhere. U. D. MIHILLS

With this last letter from the records of Winchendon and the answer from the Adjutant General, of Massachusetts in relation to the services of Wm. Moffatt in the Revolutionary War, I will close my researches, as I have found out all that I was hunting for and more, I have found where great-grandfather came from when he came over, where he settled, what his given name was, when he married, what his wife's name was, how many children he had, what their names were and what became of all of them but one. The oldest,

William was my grandfather, the second, Richard was drowned, the third, David I do not know certain what became of him, the fourth, James, settled in Littleton, N. H., and was the grandfather of Mrs. Brownson who wrote the letter from there.

In looking up the Moffatt families I find several prominent men, the great missionary Moffatt was of the same original family and he has a brother in Scotland who is a learned and eminent man. Then their is J. W. Moffatt, member of Congress, and Thomas Moffatt, of Rochester, N. Y. the great contractor said to be worth several millions, and David Moffatt, the rich banker of Denver, Colorado. I think and have not much doubt but this David Moffatt, of Denver is descendant from David the brother of my grandfather. The Moffatt's as a race are above the average statute, bony muscular and long lifed, generally temperate, industrious and busy people. The prevailing family names are William, David, James, John and Thomas, with occassionally Andrew or Alexander. William is far the most common name. My great-grandfather's name was William and my grandfather's name was William. He had a son named William. Andrew Moffatt, of this city, says his father and grandfather was named William. William Z. Moffatt, of Minneapolis, says the name William was given to one boy in every family in his line back as far as he had traced them and I find that one William Moffatt and two brothers landed at Philadelphia in 1787 and settled in Virginia, and one William Moffatt settled in North Carolina in 1772. The universal prevalance of the name William in all the different families points unmistakable to a common origin.

I will now tell what i know of my father's ancestry, which is not much. My grandfather Mihills married Mary Dimon in the town of Salem, N. H., in 1786. My father was born in 1787 and his mother died when he was one week old and his grandmother brought him up. His father went off to the

West Indies and never came back; so he never remembered having seen him and did not know much about him. My father lived with his grandfather Dimon until he was 22 years old; he then removed to Canada, where he became acquainted with and married my mother.

The original name was spelt Mighills, as we finally found out but the g. h. was silent in the pronunciation, making it Mi-ills or Mi-ulls as commonly pronounced. I recollect when I was a boy and lived at home with my parents that the old men who came from New Hampshire where father was raised always pronounced his name Miulls, and I never knew until a few years back where the pronunciation came from.

But a few years ago my youngest son William H. Mihills, heard that their was a man of our name or something near it living in Massachusetts and he wrote to him, and received the following letter, which throws considerable light on the subject.

Rowley, Mass., Jan. 22, 1886.

Mr. Wm. H. Mihills.

Dear Sir: I have the genealogy of my family from my first ancestor Thomas Mighills, who with his two sons Samuel and John came from England in the year 1638 and settled in Rowley on the homestead of which I am now the principal owner and upon which I reside, as have every generation in my line of ancestry from the said Thomas, who shortly after his settlement had another son Thomas born. His wife Ellen died in 1640, and was the first person buried in the cemetery in our town. He again married and had four sons and two daughters. Samuel, the first son married and died about 1698, without issue. John, the second son married Sarah Boat, daughter of Nicholas Boat, of Newberry. I never have learned anything further of him from Newberry records, than his marriage. Nicholis Boat, in his will mentions John's children. I think he may have moved to Newberry or some other place. Thomas, the third son was educated

and became a minister and was settled in Milton. This is all we know of him. Esekiel married and died about 1694, without issue. Stephen married and died about 1987, leaving one son and two daughters. From him is my line of ancestry; the other two sons of the first Thomas never married, and their were none afterwards, I feel pretty sure, from which you could have descended. I think we are sure we know all that have descended except from John and Thomas. I think by diligent search the descendants of these two might be traced down if there were males. Our name is a peculiar name the g h are silent in the pronunciation; pronounced Mi-ills It is more often pronounced without care Mi-ells or Mi-ulls, this oftenist. Mi-ills has been the correct way of spelling it in all the generations back to the first Thomas, I mean in our line. In the old records and other writings their have been various ways of spelling as I have said before, I have always attributed that to the ignorance or carelessness of the writer. I have watched all my life time to find this name outside of two families one beside ours, which were all that existed in my line, that all from Stephen, this makes very few males descandants, making it a rare name. Their have been other descendants from the daughters who married and either they or their children would insert Mi-ills for a middle or first name. About 40 or 45 years ago for a long time their was an advertisement in a paper which we then took of Dr. J. W. Mi-ills, Portland, Maine I never wrote being young then, but visiting Portland 28 years ago I tried to hunt him up. I found people who had known him and where his office was, but he had removed from the city, and I could not trace him. In looking over the directory I found the name of Mi-ills Nuting, as I had time I was curious enough to find him an I enquire where he got the name and to my surprise I found that he was a great-grandson of Stephen who was son of the first Thomas. I could hardly believe it, but when he told me they had large families and that

he was the youngest of sixteen children and his age was seventy years, I could see that it might be so. He told me so correctly as compared with our own records that I felt he must be correct; he also told me that his mother told him that the Mi-ill's were descended from the Scotch. Not very long ago I saw the name Mi-ills some where in the west, a prominent man. but I took no note of it at the time and have forgotten just where. When my brother Nathanul was in Amhurst college from 1856 to 1860 he learned from the librarian that their had been a man of our name living in that vicinity and he used to buy wood of him. Now it seems to me that the most direct way for you is to get what information you can from those now living of our own family, and where they have lived, and in those places to see what you can find by searching records; the same name of ours probably belongs to you. It would be a very easy and not a very uncommon thing for some of your ancestors to have dropped the g in writing the name which would make the name Mihlls. I do not feel that I have given you much light as to your genealogy but if you gain in any other way I should be glad to hear from you.

Very Truly Yours,

Charles P. Mighills.

Now he says he does not feel that he has given us much light on our generalogy, but I think he has. He says the name was spelt differently by different members of the family but mostly Miulls. Now that explains fully the reason that the old New Hampshire men always pronounced the name Miulls. I have no doubt but that was the way the name was pronounced in New Hampshire where my father was raised, but when he removed to Canada, in writing the name he dropped the g which makes it a much more agreeable name; and why I think it was my father who made the change is because there is no other family in the United States that spelled the name as we do, that I could ever find or hear of, and if it was ever spelled Mihills before my father

there would very likely be some other family aside from ours that spelled it that way to be found, and since my father emigrated to Canada to this time is 84 years, so that if their was any before him they would be heard from by this time.

I have but very little doubt that the family that settled in Rowley, Mass., in 1638 were our ancestors, that we are descendants either from John or Thomas, sons of the first Thomas, and I think that by a thorough search the lines might be traced down for 150 years to my father. But I am to old to undertake the job, but perhaps some younger member of the family may some time undertake it.

My grandfather Moffatt was born in Winchendon, Worcester county, Mass., in the year 1767 he took his father's name William and at the age of 24 he married Thankful Gibs in the town of Marlboro, Worcester county. In 1791 he removed to Vermont or to the New Hampshire grants, as it was then called and settled where the city of Middlebury now stands. Their my mother was born in 1794. Grandfather removed from Middlebury to lower Canada in 1795 and settled in the town of Shefford, Shefford county, and commenced clearing up a new farm. He had eight children, four boys and four girls. My mother was the oldest daughter. The sons names were Joseph, William, Willard and David, the daughters were Frances or Fanny, "my mother" Elizabeth, Nancy and Lodicea. William the second son died and was buried on the day that the battle of Plattsburg was fought. I have heard my mother say that they heard the cannon very distinctly when they were in the cemetery. The rest all grew up and married and had large families, so that my grand parents had sixty grand-children and several great-grand-children before they died. Grand father died in Wilmington, Essex county, N. Y. in 1851, aged 84 years. Grandmother died in Chathan, Medina county, Ohio, several years later age over 90 years.

My mother married Moses Mihills on the 10th of September 1812 and had eleven children, seven boys and four girls, and she raised them all. Four of the boys are dead but all the girls are now living. My oldest brother George married and died in Essex county, N. Y., and left three boys My second brother Lyman married Carolina Frost, in Boston, Mass., and moved to Ohio and settled in Medina county, and died there in 1866, leaving three sons and one daughter. My next brother Sylvester married and settled in Newbury, Cass county, Michigan, had two sons and one daughter, one son now living. My fourth brother Noris married and died in Beakmantown, Clinton county, N. Y., leaving one son and three daughters, he was a Methodist minister. Brother Onias died in Wilmington, N. Y., when he was twenty-one years old. My youngest brother Darias married and settled in the town of Friendship in Fond du Lac county, Wis., he has two sons. My oldest sister Maryette, married John Wilkins and lives in Wilmington, Essex county, N. Y. My second sister married Charles Thayer and lives in the city of Worcester, Mass. My third sister married Miles Holcomb and lives in Ontario, Vernon county, Wis. The youngest sister married Samuel Akerly and lives in Newburg, Cass county, Michigan. My father died in Chatham, Ohio, in the year 1863 and my mother died in the city of Fond du Lac, Wis., in 1870.

I will now try to give a little sketch of my own life and recollections for the last 70 years. I was the third son, born on the 7th of May, 1818, in the town of Stukeley, Shelford county, lower Canada, about thirty miles north of Vermont, in what was called the Eastern townships, which were at that time settled by people from New England.

When I was four years old their being no common schools established in that section then, I was sent to a private school established by a merchant's wife by the name of Willard, in her own house, for the education of the small

children of her relatives, and Mrs. Willard being very friendly with my mother, and taking a liking to me I was admitted to the school free, which I attended for about four years or until I was wanted at home in summer to help on the farm. By the time I left that school I could read pretty well and Mrs. Willard used to lend me books from her library to read. I recollect the first books of history that I ever read were Captain Cook's voyages around the world in three large volumes. I took a great liking for history and read all the books on that subject I could get hold of, both ancient and modern, and having an excellent memory, by the time I was twenty years old I was pretty well posted upon the history of mankind in all ages since history began and in all countries to which it referred, and I have kept up my reading from that day to this, and it has been a great help to me giving me an advantage over men not so well posted, and being a great source of enjoyment and satisfaction to myself.

The country was new and the roads through the woods poor and generally muddy. There was not much money in the country, the principal business was clearing up the farms and selling the ashes, an acre of that heavy timber would make 100 bushels of ashes. The merchants generaly had asheries, where they worked the ashes into pearl ash which brought from $25 to $30 a barrel in Montreal. They had teams which went around and gathered the ashes from the farmers for which they paid from 12 to 15 cents a bushel. The price was dependant on the price of pearl ash, but a great many farmers preferred to work up their own ashes into potash which brought about the same price as pearl ash: it was done in this way, the ashes were leached and the lye boiled down into a black salts, then they would put about 500 pounds of the salts, into a large kettle which was about one inch thick and heat it red hot, and melt the salts when all the impurities would rise to the top and burn off by the continued heat, until the mass showed a pure glowing sur-

face, then it was removed to coolers and when cold and hard it was broken up and packed in barrels and sent to market. Pearl ash was made in a different way, they had a pearling oven into which the salts was put and heated by a blaze that passed over them heating them very hot but not melting them. A man stood in front of the oven with a long handled iron shovel and shoveled it over until all impurities were burned out and the mass became white as snow, then it was taken out of the oven and after becoming cool was packed in barrels. A hundred bushels of ashes would make a barrel of potash or pearlash, so they had quite a fair revenue while clearing up their farms. Land was cheap, from one to two dollars an acre for wild land. From the time I was eight years old I worked on the farm summers and attended school in winter until I was sixteen years old, at that time I was fairly educated in the common branches. I then worked with a mechanic, a carpenter by the name of Whitcomb, until I was eighteen, at the time of the breaking out of the Canadian Rebellion in 1836 when I left Canada.

It is a very good grazing country and they raise wheat, rye, barley, oats and excellent peas and potatoes. It is not a corn country although they raise some corn of the early varieties.

At that time we had to reap all our grain with a sickle and thresh it out in the barn in winter with a flail. After awhile the cradle was invented and came into use. They thought that a great advance and that it could not be superseded. To keep our fires in the summer time we would cover some coals with the ashes and the fire would keep. We did not at that time have many church-bells to ring the curfew, "couvre feu, cover fire" of William the Conqueror's time, when church bells were rung to notify the people that it was time to bank the fires and put out the lights. But if the fire went out we had to go to the neighbors and get some or get it with a flint and steel. After awhile friction matches were invented, they called them locofoco matches. They were a clumsy thing to

what we have now, but it was a very useful invention and they came to stay. For lights we used dipped candles. The way they were made was thus: a lot of small straight sticks were procured and the wicks were doubled over the sticks and twisted together, a dozen on a stick about two inches apart, and then dipped in a kettle of melted tallow. When a stick full was dipped, it was placed on two benches standing handy and about two feet apart, one end on each and the candles hanging down to cool; then another stick was dipped and so on until all were dipped, and all were dipped over again until the candles were of the desired size. To keep the tallow up to the top of the kettle, hot water was poured in occasionally as the tallow was used off. Very few, if any lamps were used by the common people in those days. What were used were supplied with whale oil, petroleum having not been discovered at that time and did not come into use for a good many years later.

While the men were clearing the land or working on the farm, the women were spinning and weaving the wool and flax for clothing the family.

The hides of all animals killed for beef was taken to the tannery and exchanged for leather. Then the shoemaker would come around once a year and make and repair the shoes for the family, so they lived quite independently and kept out of debt. People in those days did want but little, but how different it is now. Four-fifths of the wants in these days are artificial, and that is the reason that the laboring people remain poor.

When I was a very small boy, among the first things that I can remember, my father brought home an almanac, one of poor Richard's, for which he paid an English shilling; not as cheap as they are now, but it contained many good things, among others was a picture of *the steamboat* and some poetry called "Johnathan's Visit to the Steamboat," and from the picture and the description, it must have been a strange craft

indeed. It was *the steamboat*, the only steamboat in the country at that time. I can remember how it looked, and can remember some of the poetry; the first line was "Did you ever go down to the steamboat," and then there is two or three verses that has gone from me, but farther on it said:

"With the noisy machinery janglin,
'Tis strange how they ever can sleep,
And long iron rods a spranglin,
Good George what a thrashing they keep.

And the fuel they use oh, by jimeny,
Their decks piled with maple and oak,
And then that great iron chimney,
By catowl how it sends out the smoke.

And that great copper kettle, my patience,
I would tell what it held if I could,
And it beats all our Nancye's relations,
To see how they heave in the wood."

This first infant monstrocity was the beginning of steam navigation which in the last seventy years has grown to cover not only the Hudson river but the waters of the world. Although it was a crude beginning, it contained the germ from which has grown the ocean grey hounds that have reduced the distance across the ocean from two or three months to five days or little more. It has been very interesting to watch this branch of improvement in navigation from its beginning to its present triumphs.

When several years ago I stood on the wharf at New York and saw the great ocean steamers at their docks, I could not but turn back in my mind to *the steamboat* that carried the great copper kettle, the pioneer or beginning of all.

The railways also have all grown up in my time. The first railroad I ever rode on was a little strip built across the sand plains from Albany to Schenectady. It was wooden rails with strap iron spiked on to them and with coaches

about as long as an omnibus, and running six or eight miles an hour; now, after fifty years of improvement, we have railroads all over the continent, equipped with solid steel rails, palace cars, sleeping and dining cars; in fact a whole first class hotel on wheels, and running fifty or sixty miles an hour.

If it had not been for steam navigation, the great western states could not have been settled up as soon as they have, and the indian and buffalo would have had a much longer lease of life, and would now have been in undisturbed possession of territory occupied by the great cities and capitals of the western states.

Surely, the last seventy-five years has been a great age of improvement, not only in steam navigation, but in every branch of manufacturing and mechanical art. When a few years ago I stood beside a wheat field of several hundred acres in Dakota, and saw a man riding on a comfortable seat and driving a team on a self-binder through the field, cutting and binding eighteen or twenty acres a day, I thought of the old sickle and the march of mechanical improvements that had taken place in agricultural machinery since that day. I was about thirty years old when the telegraph was invented and put in practice. I lived at that time in the city of Troy, N. Y., engaged in the wholesale grocery business, and there was a merchant from the north, who came to Troy, whom we supplied, and he wanted a certain brand of molasses that we did not have in the store, but I told him we would have it for him the next morning. They had just got the telegraph through from N. Y. to Troy and there was a line of steamers one of which left N. Y. every evening; so I telegraphed a merchant there to put a hogshead of molasses on the steamer coming up. The next morning the merchant called at my house to inquire about it and I told him it was there. We had a young lady from the north stopping at our house at that time, and when she went home, she told her grand-

mother with whom she lived; that the telegraph must be a curious thing. She said I sent down to New York and had a hogshead of molasses brought up to Troy on the telegraph one morning before breakfast, so when I went north I had to explain it to the old lady. That was a great invention and revolutionized all intelligence and business matters throughout the civilized world. The electric cables are stretched under every ocean, and bring all nations into neighborhood and sympathy with each other, making "all the world akin." From a small beginning it has grown to wonderful proportions and the end is not yet.

"The steed called lightening says the fates,
Is owned in these United States,
'Twas Franklin's hand that caught the horse,
'Twas harnessed by Professor Morse."

When I was a boy we had but scanty means of intelligence: once in a great while we would get a letter written two or three weeks before by paying twenty-five cents to get it out of the office or from the postman. The one that got the letter had to do the paying. After awile the rates were reduced to ten cents and then to five and then to three, and finally two cents. We can now sit down in the morning and pick up our newspaper and read of the doings, and happenings all over the world yesterday; Shurely it is wonderful. Then the companion of the telegraph is the telephone, the handmaid of commerce, equally useful as the telegraph; by which you may chat with a friend or business correspondant twenty rods away, or a thousand miles, and hear and distinguish his voice if you are acquainted with him; and the phongoraph by which you may bottle up the speech of a friend and hear him talk long years after he is dead. What next? Not least is the electric light; some difference from the old tallow dip which I used to help my mother to make. Then there is the electric railways and electric everything. If the

announcement was made that means had been discovered for communicating with the people of Mars, we should not be much astonished in view of what has already been done. And all this has been accomplished through the medium of the little joker, that climbed down out of the clouds on Franklin's kite string, and modestly introduced himself something more than a hundred years ago, but the coy joker was a long time getting into harness. The people did not understand him, but now that they have fairly made his acquaintance, they find him to be the great controlling power of the universe.

Everything seemed to come along just when it was most needed. When the whale was getting scarce and extinction threatened; the call was so great for the oil, petroleum made its appearance and supplied its place, and this petroleum with all its products has added greatly to the commerce of the world.

I came from Canada to the state of New York in 1836, in the last part of Jackson's administration, and the year that the Canadian Rebellion broke out., I married Caroline Partridge of Wilmington, Essex Co., N. Y., and was engaged in the retail business until 1847. I then removed to the city of Troy, N. Y, and engaged in the wholesale grocery business. I followed that business for a few years when I sold out and went back to Essex Co. and engaged in the iron business for a short time; but that proving unprofitable, I sold out and moved my family west, finally settled at Hartford in Washington Co., Wisconsin. I bought a farm there and built a saw mill and engaged in farming and lumbering for eight years. I then removed to the city of Fond du Lac, Wis., in the year 1865 at the close of the great rebellion, and engaged more extensively in lumbering and manufacturing. We had ten children, five boys and five girls. Our oldest boy died when he was two years and a half old, but all the rest we raised to maturity. One son and one daughter have since died, and my wife died on the twelvth of September, 1891, just fifty-two years from the day we were married.

Two of my sons, Guin N. and the youngest, William H. both live in this city and are engaged in the lumber business; the other son, Dorlon, lives in Evansville in this state and is engaged in the lumber business in Madison. The oldest daughter, Persis A., "Mrs. Johnson" and the youngest, Ermina M. live in this city. The second daughter, Myra J. "Mrs. Temby" lives in Houston, Texas; the third one Francis C. "Mrs. Bishop" lives in Denver Colorado.

I have never sought for or solicited an election or an appointment to any political position in my life, but I have filled several important places, both by election and appointment. When I lived in the state of New York I was elected three times in succession to represent my town on the Board of Supervisors, and after I came to this city, I was appointed by the Governor, one of the county commissioners, and I was several times elected a member of the City Council; when the county government was changed from commissioners to the county board I was elected a supervisor and on the assembling of the board, they elected me their chairman.

In 1870 I was elected a member of the State Legislature, and was appointed one of the committee to visit and inspect and settle with all the charitable and penal institutions of the state; and to recommend such appropriations as was thought necessary for the coming year. I was assigned as chairman of the most important committee of the house, that on lumber and manufactures and I held that position all the time that I was in the legislature. In the fall of 1870 there was a convention appointed by the governors of the northern states to meet in Cincinatti; each state to send two delegates to confer with the delegates from the south in relation to the situation there, in regard to trade and commerce. It was called a commercial convention. I was appointed one of the members from Wisconsin, by Governor Fairchild; the convention was in session about three weeks, a great number of subjects were

discussed, the condition of the harbors and ports, that had been filled up as a protection by the south or to blockade the southern ports, had to be cleared out and the obstructions cleared out of the rivers, etc. The plan was, after the ground was fairly looked over, to make such recommendations to Congress as we thought proper. Mr. Garret, the president of the Baltimore and Ohio R. R. was chosen chairman of the convention. A great many noted men were gathered there and a great deal learned in regard to the condition of the southern county after the war was over. I was elected again the next year and served through another term of the legislature. I became acquainted with a great many prominent men throughout the state which has been a source of pleasure to me ever since.

To show that I enjoyed a fair share of the confidence and respect of the business men of our state, I will give the substance of a state paper received November 6, 1873 from Governor Washborn of Wisconsin

State of Wisconsin, Cadwaleder C. Washborn, Gov.

To all to whom these presents shall come greeting, know ye that reposing especial trust and confidence in the integrity and ability of U. D. Mihills. I have appointed him a director of the states prison; in accordance with the provisions of chapter 193, general laws of 1873 and I do hereby authorize and empower him to execute and to fulfill the duties of that trust according to his best discretion, for the period of four years from the first day of January, 1873, unless the governor of this state for the time being shall think proper sooner to revoke and determine this commission; In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the great seal of the state of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at Madison this sixth day of November, in the year of our Lord 1873.

C. C. Washburn.

I never asked for this or any other appointment. I knew nothing about it until it came to me; in fact I did not know

Governor Washborn at that time, and had never seen him, but I suppose it was through his advisors that the appointment was made.

In order to preserve the knowledge which I possessed and which I gained by research in regard to our ancestry, and to give posterity a start ing point in preserving the line of descent for those who may wish to continue or improve these records I have written this sketch of our ancestry, as far as I know; and I have given a little sketch of my own life up to seventy-five years, which may be interesting to some,

U. D. Mhills.

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